

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Environment**  
**“Perfluorinated Chemicals in the Environment: An Update on the Response**  
**to Contamination and Challenges Presented”**  
**September 6, 2018**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Thank you for yielding to me, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief.

Today, the Environment Subcommittee is holding a hearing on a class of certain man-made organic chemicals—what are known as per-fluorinated chemicals—that are found in many common household items such as food packaging, non-stick cookware, clothing, shoes, furniture, and carpets.

I know these chemicals are a topic on the minds of many Americans. I was recently in Michigan with Mr. Upton and understand the concerns of many there where these chemicals are so pervasive, toxicity information for numerous PFAS is illusive, and people are rightly confused and scared. I understand, from Mr. Hudson, that a similar situation exists in his state and I appreciate his efforts to help North Carolinians.

The goal of this hearing is three-fold.

First: the hearing should help increase our understanding about what the government knows – or doesn’t – and establish what the public should know about the risks, how confident they should be in that information, and the best ways to prevent unhealthy exposures to these chemicals;

Second: it should explore what can be done right now to address contamination by these substances based on what we know, starting with the practical steps that may be taken to reduce risks from contamination; and

Third, it should help develop an outline for a more sustained strategy to fill important information gaps, identifying any longer-term challenges, and setting realistic expectations for results based on a science and risk-informed decision-making.

I would like to thank Chairman Shimkus for assembling these two informative panels of witnesses. They have important knowledge on not only the complicated nature of PFAS contaminated sites and the state of the science on these contaminants, but also on the policy.

I know EPA announced a more comprehensive PFAS plan this past May and has been traveling the country to hear from people impacted by PFAS contamination. We look forward to hearing where EPA ranks PFAS exposure in terms of the other environmental and public threats it is facing, how the federal government plans to try to tackle the issues associated with these PFAS chemicals, including around Defense Department sites, and to learning about the technical and economic barriers that states and communities face in dealing with this contamination.

I want to thank our witnesses for agreeing to be with us today. We welcome your insights on both the science and the policy of this complicated issue. I look forward to our testimony and learning from your experience and perspectives.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman for this time. I yield back the remainder of my time.